



American Legion  
**MEL BAHER**  
COMMISSIONER



American Veterans  
**FRANK POCCHI**  
COMMISSIONER



Disabled American Veterans  
**LENON WRIGHT**  
COMMISSIONER



Veterans of Foreign Wars  
**JAMES RILEY**  
COMMISSIONER



Vietnam Veterans of America  
**BOB POTTS**  
COMMISSIONER

**JON REISS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**FERONNE WILLIAMS**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

## Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission

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### MINUTES

**DATE/TIME:** February 4, 2026 9:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Frank Pocci, President  
Bob Potts, Secretary  
Mel Baher, Commissioner  
James Riley, Commissioner  
Jon Reiss, Executive Director  
Feronne Williams, Deputy Director  
Mary Kitko, Executive Secretary  
Craig Morice, Assistant County Prosecutor

**EXCUSED:** Lenon Wright, Vice President

**VISITORS:** None.

**PURPOSE:** GENERAL MONTHLY MEETING

The meeting was called to order by President Frank Pocci with the Pledge of Allegiance. Board Secretary Bob Potts called roll.

A motion was made by Jim Riley to dispense with the reading of the Consent Agenda and to accept the agenda with the necessary corrections and/or additions (All Commissioners have a copy of the minutes). Motion seconded by Mel Baher. Discussion: None.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

### **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

#### Mel Baher – American Legion

- January 8<sup>th</sup> – attended the American Legion Post 91 membership meeting held at 7:00 p.m. – presented December 2025 financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- January 16<sup>th</sup> – left for Dublin, Ohio to attend the American Legion Department of Ohio Mid-winter conference held at the Marriott Inn on Saturday January 17<sup>th</sup> and Sunday January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Also attended the Ohio Attorney General’s charities training session on Saturday on behalf of the American Legion Post 91 – returned home Sunday evening
- January 22<sup>nd</sup> – attended the American Legion Post 91 Executive Board meeting held at 7:00 p.m. – presented updated December 2025 financial reports as Post Finance Officer
- January 26<sup>th</sup> – attended the American Legion 13<sup>th</sup> District Executive Board meeting held at Post 196 in Brecksville, Ohio at 7:00 p.m. – provided December 2025 financial reports as District Finance Officer

Contacted Mary with several DD214 requests and made a couple referrals to our Service Department for follow-up

Volunteered at Post 91 with planned activities and work parties, as needed.

Frank Pocci – AMVETS

- Referred two veterans to file claims at the Veterans Service Commission
- Presented a widow of a veteran with a flag case

Bob Potts – VVA

- Spoke to the hospital administrator about what the VSC does for veterans

James Riley – VFW

- January 8<sup>th</sup> – attended the Catholic War Veterans #579 meeting
- January 12<sup>th</sup> – monthly Guitars 4 Vets jam and lesson
- January 28<sup>th</sup> – as Adjutant, prepared minutes and attended monthly VFW #2533 meeting
- January 28<sup>th</sup> – met with attorney as executor for deceased veteran's estate
- January 29<sup>th</sup> – performed monthly rifle salute detail at Western Reserve National Cemetery – 7 funerals
- January 30-31<sup>st</sup> – attended Mid-Winter VFW conference in Columbus – presented plaques to police, fire, paramedic, and dispatcher award winners

Bi-monthly – compiled two-month calendar and wrote a military related article for the DD214 Chronicle paper

Lenon Wright - DAV

- Excused

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The Executive Director gave his weekly building update. Issues include several sinks leaking, shower drain not draining, boiler/HVAC unable to heat the building in sub-zero temperatures. Also discussed the size of the elevator and that it is unable to transport wheelchair bound individuals comfortably. The option of putting a new elevator in was discussed and capital funds will be set aside.

The lease for the storage facility was approved and signed. Once the VSC obtains the keys, storage items will be moved from U-Haul, the Board of Elections and the headquarters building.

The Walt Collins veteran housing project is finalizing rules and grant compliance. Director Reiss will attend a meeting with Mr. Collins next week.

Capital funds will be set aside for future projects to include expansion, parking, and a new elevator.

The staff holiday luncheon, catered by Mission BBQ, will be held at the headquarters building on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher to approve Resolution 2026-11 providing for the authority of the Executive Director to providing for the purchase of marketing/advertising for the Cuyahoga County Veterans Service Commission for 2026. This marketing agreement is with the Cleveland Guardians, expenses not to exceed \$58,000. Motion seconded by Bob Potts. Discussion: None

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

Commissioner Riley, along with Sandra Uzell, presented Cleveland EMS of the Year with an award named for Clayton Uzell, former Commissioner.

Commissioner Baher will be heading to Washington DC to speak with representatives about veteran issues.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Mel Baher to go into Executive Session to consider employment of a public employee.

Motion seconded by Jim Riley.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried. (10:38 a.m.)

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to the regular order of business at 11:41 a.m. In Executive Session the Board discussed employment of a public employee.

A motion was made by Bob Potts to approve the lateral move of Lovell Payten from Outreach Coordinator to Veterans Case Manager. Motion seconded by Mel Baher Discussion: None.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Bob Potts to probationary terminate Nicole Jacobs. Motion seconded by Mel Baher Discussion: None.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.

With no further business, a motion was made by Bob Potts to adjourn the meeting at 11:46 a.m. Motion seconded by Mel Baher.

AYES: Baher, Pocci, Potts, Riley. NAYS: None. Motion carried.



Frank Pocci, President



Bob Potts, Secretary

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Filing claims with the Dept. of  
Veterans' Affairs/Memorial Affairs:  
Financial Assistance Manager:  
Executive Director:  
Deputy Director:  
Commissioners:

John Rosine, Service Office Mgr. (216-698-2639)  
Geniece Garner (216)-698-4955  
Jon Reiss (216-698-2611)  
Feronne Williams (216-698-3845)  
Mary Kitko, Secretary to the Board (216-698-2651)